

written fifty pages. This continued inertia makes me sad, but I have hopes that if we get on without fresh vexations for six months more his spirits may be raised. I had a great row about the portrait of Charles 1st, but was quite successful. The consequence is that I have got a new miniature,¹ in which the likeness is exactly hit, and at a cheaper rate. With best love to all,

Most affectionately yours,

B.D.

On the homeward journey through France Disraeli turned aside with the Austens to see the Layards at school, and Sir Henry Layard, then a boy at school, caught a passing glimpse of his future chief. 'I still retain a vivid recollection of his appearance, his black curly hair, his affected manner, and his somewhat fantastic dress.'² Mrs. Austen's letters to Sarah Disraeli testify to his possession of that rare virtue — excellence as a travelling companion. 'Your brother,' she writes, 'is so easily pleased, so accommodating, so amusing, and so actively kind, that I shall always reflect upon the domestic part of our journey with the greatest pleasure.' And, again, more dubiously : — 'Your brother has behaved excellently, except when there is a button, or, rather, buttons to be put on his shirt; then he is violently bad, and this happens almost daily. I said once, "They cannot have been good at first"; and now he always threatens to "tell my Mother you have abused my linen."'

The methodical Austen kept careful statistics of the journey. They posted more than 2,000 miles, and Disraeli's share of the

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¹ This miniature is still at
Hughenden.

² Layard's
Autobiography I., p. 18.

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